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Ebb Tide by Sandy Simpson



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Prayer is a vital part of our Christian walk. The Bible shows how to pray: Pray for the people of your nation (Num 21:7). Pray for your city (Jer 29:7). Pray for peace in Jerusalem (Ps 122:6). Pray for your persecutors (Mat 5:43-44; Luke 6:28). Pray for children (Mat 19:13). Pray for escape from judgment (Luke 21:36). Pray you will not fall into temptation (Luke 22:40). Pray for Christians (Job 17:9; 1 Thes

5:25; Heb 13:18). Pray for boldness in proclaiming the gospel and for God to do miracles in people's lives (Acts 4:29-31). Pray all the time, be alert, pray for the saints (Eph 6:18). Pray for fearless preaching (Eph 6:20). Pray to be filled with the knowledge of His will (Col 1:9). Pray for open doors for the gospel (Col 4:3). Pray that the Word of God may be glorified (2 Thes 3:1). Pray for deliverance from evil men (2 Thes 3:2). Pray for everyone, kings, authorities, peace, quiet, godliness, holiness (1 Tim 2:1,2). Pray for life for dead sinners (1 John 5:16). These are just a few examples of things we should be praying for from Scripture.

But there are groups in Micronesia today advocating methods of prayer that are

unbiblical. The Bible does not call us to bind territorial demons. It does not tell us to go up on mountaintops bringing items with us to magically reconcile male and female. It does not teach us to spray "holy" oil on idols and around cities, put stakes in the ground, do prayer walks, proclaim salvation for nations from hilltops by blowing shofars or throwing out wheat seed. These things are all borrowed from the occult and have no place in the Church. Paul urged us not to go beyond what is written. Long prayer meetings put on as a religious show are Pharisaical. God does not respect those who are self-righteous. Go to your room, close your door, and pray biblical prayers. Then you will see God answer the prayer in His wondrous way.



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What Prayer Will And Will Not Do by Mike Oppenheimer

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Prayer is our communication to the God we serve. Prayer should not be a chore but a joy, just as you love to talk with someone who interests you—who you love, and who you want to grow in a relationship with. Prayer is not necessarily worship but it is an essential element to our Christian life. Our relationship toward God is sustained and strengthened by our prayer, as His relationship toward us is sustained by His Word through His Spirit.

If we are going to spend serious time in prayer, we need to first put some things in order. We need to have our own heart searched out. Any unforgiveness or resentment is to be dealt with. Any sin we may be practicing needs to be repented of. We need to be cleansed before we enter the holy place. We come to Him on the basis of the blood of Christ. Any prideful attitude needs to be humbled by exercising our will and coming to God in total

dependence on His mercy and grace. When we pray we should not just be speaking but be still enough to listen. The Lord, through His Spirit, may lead us to a Scripture. It may be for us, it may be for another, and it may show us how to pray.

We find the Holy Spirit in Rom. 8:14-15 leads us to cry out "Abba". Gal 4:6: "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, (the Spirit) cry's out, 'Abba, Father.'" He is another advocate to our relationship to God by prayer. There is no evidence in Scripture that anyone prayed or worshipped the Holy Spirit unless He was included in worship with the triune God. It is the Spirit's ministry that brings one to Christ. The Holy Spirit has a different position, functioning in a submissive role to Christ, just as Christ was in a submissive position to the Father on Earth. Likewise the Spirit does the same, taking a subordinate role to both Christ and



the Father when He is sent to earth (Jn. 16:13). His purpose is not to bring attention to himself but to the Son.

We may have lists of needs to pray for but there should be room for the Holy Spirit to show us how to pray. We are to be led by the Spirit in our prayers to know the will of God. In other words we need to be flexible. In this way we may not always have the knowledge in praying for a specific request but we trust in the Holy Spirit's leading.

If we are speaking to God and

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More Magical Jabez-Type Prayers by Sandy Simpson

Humor

A Prayer For Every Occasion And For Everything You Want

My current response to people who come up to me and say that they got everything they wanted by praying the prayer of Jabez every day, word for word, is this: "Maybe you ought to try the Rosary next! It has also shown great

success. While you're at it, why not offer up a whole platter of pragmatic magical prayers in an attempt to force God to act, based on the fact that He answered a man called Jabez? After all, we simply need the right formulas, the right intonations, and the politically correct words to get God to answer, right? If you believe that, let me offer you some other alternatives to the Jabez prayer. To get the desired reaction out of

God you must remember to vainly repeat the same prayer, word for word, daily or even hourly. God will not be forced to react to your prayer if you don't follow it exactly. Here are just a few of the guaranteed formula prayers you can pray, creating reality with your words:

Prayer: The Prayer Of Abraham's Chief Servant
Location: Genesis 24:12

What Prayer Will And Will Not Do *cont.*

being influenced by His Spirit then our prayer will never be self-centered or about things not pertaining to His kingdom. On one hand we submit our hopes, our needs. On the other hand we need to examine our motives and God's will in a given situation. The longing desire of our heart has to be what Christ would want done or the prayer does not rise to Him to even be considered. If we pray as Jesus would then we should expect our prayers to be answered. A study on Jesus and the apostle's prayers is helpful in understanding and training oneself in prayer.

Prayer is the means by which God gets His will done on earth, not the means by which man gets his will done in heaven.

James 5:17-18 tells us, "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit." It wasn't Elijah's asking that accomplished this but it was God answering his request because it was His will. He had a purpose in it. God can take away things by our praying and affect people and nations and He can add things and bless them. He can do beyond even what we ask for because we are under a covenant of grace. He can and does miracles for his namesake. We cannot limit God in our prayers nor can we command Him or control Him, getting Him to do what we would like by our request. Ps.145:18 "the Lord is near to all those who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth."

I Jn.3:22-24 "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him." Notice if we keep His commandments and do what is right we will have our prayers answered. In Isa. 65:24 "God says

before they call I will answer, while they are still speaking I will hear." He loves to respond to what we ask.

We all have practical needs that we should submit to our Lord. We all need funds for the rent, for house or car repairs, our children's education. We all need food, we all need gas in the car. If we are asking to spend the funds on a holiday or something bigger or newer than we already have without it being a necessity, God will see our prayer as selfish and He will not answer that prayer. God is able to read our hearts to see what our secret motives are. These may not even be known to us. So we should examine what is in our own hearts and ask as David asked "Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me." We should not pray token prayers that we quickly throw up to heaven without considering the content.

Many of us do not have the confidence in coming to God and presenting our needs in our prayers. I Jn. 5:14-15 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him." We should understand the general will of God for people and have spiritual insight to know what He is specifically doing in someone's life so that our prayers will be on target.

Some of us are overconfident and become bold to ask just about anything WE want. James says two things: James 4:2-4 "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

When we put the things of the world—our physical comforts—ahead of God in our life we forfeit Him as Lord. We put ourselves at

enmity with God. When we pray for something, we must make sure that we are not asking for something that goes against God's revealed will. If we are asking for prosperity to live in luxury to satisfy our insecurities, we better hope that God does not answer this prayer. Many have had it answered only to learn a hard lesson.

Just as we are to handle our doctrine correctly we are also to handle our prayers. Our petitions will reveal what we believe is most important in our lives. Our prayers are to come through the cross. This means dying to our self-desires so that we can be focused on God's purposes. It is these prayers He delights in answering. But there is a condition—faithfulness in our lives. If we ask for more ministry He may have that intention but if we have not been faithful in the small things we need to become faithful before any expansion can happen. God is not going to grow a church if the people are not being fed and they are being neglected.

We should not write out prayers and send them in with a very generous donation at the request of a famous TV evangelist. Don't expect them to be more appropriately answered because you exercised faith by sending a gift that was more than you had in your bank. When you see the prayer requests piled up in front of some "man of faith", this is done on purpose to prove the reaching effects of his "ministry". He then utters a general public prayer over the thousands of requests to be answered and it's over. This is not how prayer is to be done. The motives of an intercessor are just as important as what they ask for. Our prayers are to specific and to be for individuals, if possible.

James 1:5-8 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, without doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." So we ask in faith. We believe He hears us and we trust His decision for when and how to answer our prayer.

I Jn 5:14-15 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the

area or person. If you're speaking to the Devil in the atmosphere you are no longer praying to God.

We don't want to become narcissistic, praying what I want to be, what I want to happen in my way. It should be God's will and plans we are concerned about. Praying in Jesus' name is not a guaranty we will receive anything we ask or say—and we can certainly thank Him for that. He doesn't want spoiled little children, but mature heavenly-minded people who look at His word and are willing to be conformed to His likeness, even if it's uncomfortable. Those who can trust Him in His decisions He can entrust with answers.

If we petition God for riches, power, honor, knowledge, or reputation—for ourselves—that is seeking our own kingdom. If we petition God for riches, power, honor, knowledge, or reputation, for His kingdom we need to have Him search our hearts to know if our motives are pure. So how do we know how to pray and be on target? Charles H. Spurgeon stated it like this, "Sometimes a fog will settle over a vessel's deck and yet leave the topmast clear. Then a sailor goes up aloft and gets a lookout which the helmsman on deck cannot get. So prayer sends the soul aloft, lifts it above the clouds in which our selfishness and egotism befog us and give us a chance to see which way to steer."

James 1:5-8 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, without doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." So we ask in faith. We believe He hears us and we trust His decision for when and how to answer our prayer.

I Jn 5:14-15 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the

What Prayer Will And Will Not Do *end*

request to test our hearts.

Jesus prayed "Thy will be done" and taught the apostles to do the same. The apostles followed Jesus' way of praying God's will. If God has no will then He would have no influence over the affairs of mankind. We would then be in charge, which is not a comforting thought. Imagine hundreds or thousands praying for the same thing, such as a job, but only one would get it. Its not because one person prayed more often or better. God's will is involved. He has a plan and we need to gain insight into it to be part of His plans. When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray He taught them to pray in a certain manner. It was never meant to be a repetition said over and over. No prayer is. Jesus never said a certain prayer is more powerful than another. Jesus taught the disciples to pray in this way, contrary to the way the Pharisee's prayed.

Our Father which art in Heaven ... speaks of our relationship—we are to consider the person we are speaking to and address Him in reverence.

Hallowed be thy name ... speaks of worship, exalting him for who he is—we are speaking of our reverence and respect of Him Who we now know, praising and thanking Him.

Bible Study *end*

make ourselves look better. God already knows what we are like anyway! We must ask for mercy because we don't deserve anything.

In the beginning of **verse 14** we find out what righteousness is. It is the gift of God granted by means of Christ's atoning sacrifice to sinners who come to Him in repentance of their sins recognizing that they cannot be righteous in themselves. What does it mean to be justified? It is going from being bad to being

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven ... speaks of our submission to His Lordship in our lives and our affairs on earth. Asking for His influence to change things that are contrary to His ways, first in us so we can be His representatives to others. We should look for God's will in a given situation that we may be part of it. If it is not apparent to us we should pray that it will be.

Give us this day our daily bread ... addresses dependence and petitions God to be our supplier. We pray for our physical and spiritual needs to be met by His hand. We are promised He will supply our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ... forgiveness is to be consistent lifestyle. We want to practice forgiveness and let things that are not crucial roll off of us. We should be willing to hear things out and try to make peace. To forgive does not mean we intentionally ignore biblical issues but we forgive human ones.

Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one ... addresses our need for guidance and discerning good from evil. God will always make a way out for those who want to be delivered from bondage and evil. We should be aware of the schemes of the enemy.

good, from being guilty to being innocent, from being unjust to being just. Can we have a relationship with God and go to heaven if we are not justified? Our "good works" may keep us out of heaven as they kept out the Pharisee. The parable teaches us that God welcomes the despairing, hopeless sinner and rejects the man who is self-righteous.

Jesus ends His parable with the words: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen ... we are to give Him all the honor, allegiance, loyalty and worship. No man should receive this no matter how godly they are. It is due to the One Who is our Creator and the Maker of all things.

Since Jesus died and rose from the dead, our access to God is now immediate. As the book of Hebrews says, we can come boldly before the throne of grace because of His shed blood.

The position of our body or how uncomfortable we are when we pray is not important. It's not how loud we are or how many we may have praying in agreement. Nor is it any repetition of our prayer that would bring a speedy answer. It begins as a matter of our heart—being open and honest. We are to seek God's will in our prayers as we are in God's will. If God's will is not apparent, pray for His will to be known to you. Sometimes a person praying to receive an answer from God may get a "yes", a "wait" or a "no". There are decisions from God that we will never understand this side of heaven and we are to accept them as His hand of divine providence for our lives.

It is not a certain prayer that yields results. Not the prayer of Jabez, not the prayer of Jesus repeated over and over to bring you blessings. Cleverly designed techniques, like

spiritual mapping, only feed into our carnal desires and they will never reach the presence of God for answers. There is no package of words that can move the hand of God to be quicker or more constant. The Christian object in prayer is God, not the prayer itself. That means we put our trust in Someone greater and wiser than us. Real faith causes anticipation in prayer that God hears us and that He will answer in His way and His time. Faith is to have an absolute, yet simple assurance of God's promise, and have the patience for God's timing.

We want to be confident that God will answer our prayer. We want to pray on target so our prayers hit the mark. Intercession is someone pleading on behalf of others. Jesus is the church's High Priest Who continually intercedes for each of us personally to the Father. Jesus leaves the unsaved in our hands to pray to God to save them. If you know someone who needs the Lord in their life, start praying for them and see what God can do. He just may answer beyond your wildest expectations.

—
Mike Oppenheimer is a Christian Jew. His apologetics ministry is called "Let Us Reason Ministries" and is located on the web at: <http://www.letusreason.org/>



Juanita Simpson is a retired missionary still serving the Lord in Micronesia after 38 years of ministry.

More Magical Jabez-Type Prayers *end*

Purpose: To get God to give you a marriage partner. Works for both guys or girls.

Pray This: O LORD, God of my master Abraham (your name here), give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham (your name here). See, I am standing beside this spring (or wherever you are standing), and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water (or whatever they are doing). May it be that when I say to a girl, "Please let down your jar that I may have a drink, (or any other leading question)" and she says, "Drink, and I'll water your camels too" (or any other answer fleece you wish to use) – let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac (your name here). By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master (your name here).

Prayer: The Prayer Of Manoah
Location: Judges 13:8

Purpose: To get God to bring your favorite teachers back to your church.

Pray This: "O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born (may substitute any subject you want taught)."

Prayer: The Prayer Of Samson
Location: Judges 16:28

Purpose: To get God to give you big muscles and revenge.

Pray This: "O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get

revenge on the Philistines (or whomever you are angry at) for my two eyes (or whatever they did to you)."

Prayer: The Prayer Of David

Location: 2 Samuel 15:31

Purpose: To get God to mess with people's minds.

Pray This: "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's (or whoever you want to mess with) counsel into foolishness."

Prayer: The Prayer Of Elijah #1

Location: 1 Kings 18:36-37

Purpose: To get God to send fire from heaven. (Kids, don't try this at home!)

Pray This: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel (or wherever you are) and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

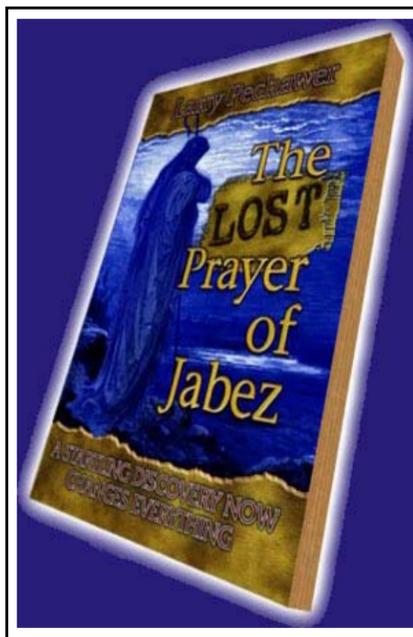
Prayer: The Prayer Of Elijah #2
Location: 1 Kings 19:4

Purpose: To get God to show Himself. (This may seem like a roundabout way of making God show Himself, but it worked for Elijah)

Pray This: "I have had enough, LORD ... Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

Prayer: The Prayer Of Elisha #1
Location: 2 Kings 6:17

Purpose: To get God to let you actually see angels.



Larry Pechawer is the "Grinch" that stole the "Christmas of Jabez." For many who have jumped on the wagon of The Prayer of Jabez this booklet is a necessary corrective to an unfortunate Jabez fascination with some unfortunate Biblical interpretations. I heartily agree with and endorse the author's "Bah Humbug" as well as his enlightening new interpretation.

Dr. John H. Walton,
Professor of Old Testament,
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

To buy this book, go to:
www.lostjabez.com

Pray This: "O LORD, open his (substitute your name here) eyes so that he (substitute your name here) may see."

Prayer: The Prayer Of Elisha #2
Location: 2 Kings 6:18

Purpose: To get God to cause someone you don't like to be blind.
Pray This: "Strike these people (substitute someone you don't like) with blindness."

Prayer: The Prayer Of Nehemiah
Location: Nehemiah 6:9

Purpose: To get God to make your hands strong. (This one can get a little repetitive, but then if you like these pragmatic magical prayers

that shouldn't be a problem for you. It can also put you into a nice altered trance state at the same time.)

Pray This: "Now strengthen my hands."

If you have other needs I'm sure you can find a magic prayer in God's Word for almost any occasion. After all, that's what the Bible is for, isn't it?

I'm not laughing now! Can you see how ridiculous the prayer of Jabez is today when it is yanked from its proper context? I hope these examples, presented with some humor, have helped!

own Word to bring about His desired end. He is God, and He will do it.

Kent Philpott, an article from the *Evangelical Times*, a publication of *Evangelical Press of Great Britain*.

mappers have not been paying off. What city has been "taken for God?" Yes, there are the transformational videos, which purport to document cities transformed by the implementation of spiritual mapping techniques. There are also those, however, who say the video presentations present a false picture (full of lies and fabrications).

There will be something new coming along soon enough. And there has already been a name change—Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare. Sounds quite sophisticated and contemporary, high tech evangelism. But after the spiritual mapping project runs its course, there will be something else that will entice and deceive. My feeling that whatever it is will

be more blatantly magical than even spiritual mapping. Evangelism and Missions—this is our responsibility. We are to preach Jesus, His cross and resurrection. We are to bring the gospel to the entire world. We proclaim the finished work of Jesus, including His triumph over the devil and the entire demonic kingdom. We can be confident that God will use His

Spiritual Mapping *by Kent Philpott*

It started with John Dawson's book *Taking Our Cities for God*, published in 1989 by Creation House. The book's subtitle is: "How to Break Spiritual Strongholds."

John Dawson, at that time, directed Youth With A Mission in Los Angeles, California. In a quest for more effective evangelism tools, he taught that demonic forces block gospel efforts. He focused particularly on geographical areas such as cities, especially cities. His thesis: the power and influence of the "principalities and powers" over a city must be broken before the gospel will significantly advance. He said that "satanic forces manifest(ing) themselves in the culture of the city," (page 19) and will prevent conversions from occurring.

TEARING DOWN STRONGHOLDS

"To overcome the enemy we must resist temptation ourselves and then continue in united, travelling prayer until we sense that we have gained authority and that God has broken through." (page 21) It is also necessary, insisted Dawson, that "the spiritual leaders of a city are walking in friendship and respect, then the full power of God can be released against principalities and powers." (page 100) Furthermore, Dawson concluded that faith and obedience must be "strategically" applied. (page 153)

THE STRATEGY

According to Dawson, the history of the target city must be studied and understood by the evangelist who takes spiritual mapping seriously. Certain key questions must be answered. For example, How and why did the city begin? Who were the founders and what were their intentions and spiritual condition? What presently characterizes the city, or, what is it known for? This and much more information is necessary in order to "map" the city. The latest demographic study of the city should be analyzed. The history of race relations must be studied along with any traumatic event the city had experienced like an earthquake, a flood, etc. With all in

hand then, the demonic spirit(s) in control of the city will be identified and thus their power can be broken by the use of some appropriate human effort. For instance, if a city is characterized by pride, then the Christian response ought to be humility. This offsetting of spiritual traits, the spiritual mappers believe, is the key to breaking the demonic stronghold.

AN UPDATE—SENTINEL

Now though, the seeds of Dawson's ideas have taken root in Sentinel, a ministry based in Colorado Springs, CO and directed by George Otis Jr. It is becoming the new, big thing, at least in the USA. The following is from the web site, *Mobilizing Global Prayer for Evangelism*, which operates in conjunction with Sentinel.

Spiritual mapping is an attempt to see our city (or nation or neighborhood) as it really is, not as it appears to be. It is a serious effort to discern the spiritual forces of the invisible world which directly influence the visible, everyday world and prevent men and women from hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL MAPPING IN MARIN

Very recently the "servant-leader" for Marinvision—the spiritual leaders who have a vision for Marin, the county where I live, filled me in on the local mapping project. He was hoping to get me "on board." George Otis Jr., he said, had great insight into Marin County and Otis, along with many Marin pastors, was working on the county's spiritual map. With the map completed and the spiritual leaders in one accord, then the demonic forces would be dismantled and stripped of their power—the gospel would prevail and we would take our whole county for God.

Unhappily I shocked this old friend and "servant-leader" for Marinvision by opting out of the mapping project; I would not be in one accord. If at all possible, I would have liked to have been included. I do not relish standing apart from my colleagues and brothers in Christ. Besides, I knew that to many

I would once again be viewed as a "nay-sayer" and a spiritually outdated cynic.

IT LOOKS GOOD

It is an attractive package: evangelism is the goal, God is to be praised, Christians work in harmony, and prayer is the foundational method. All that is needed is a spiritual map. How could any Christian possibly be against it?

A DISSENTING OPINION

I wish spiritual mapping would work. Here it is, gospel preaching, praying for the lost, waging spiritual warfare and Christians uniting as well. But let us reason together.

If this were indeed the biblical pattern for evangelism we might expect to see some expression of it in the New Testament. Yes, Paul does speak of principalities, powers, strongholds, but they are not put together as Otis and Dawson have. If spiritual mapping was the means of salvation for the lost, we could expect a clear command, instruction or example of its use in Scripture. Instead, Jesus sent His disciples out to preach the gospel. Jesus did not give means other than preach, witness and disciple.

Spiritual Mapping strikes me as a magical, works centered ploy. Consider the program: the demonic powers over an area must be discerned by means of demographics, histories, etc., then prayer is used, by spiritual leaders united and in one accord in the target area to break the demonic stronghold. Whatever happened to the sovereign work of God? All that is needed apparently is knowledge, leaders in one accord and prayer. It is man centered, it is the work of man, and it is magical. Do we see this in any of the great awakenings, do we see this in the Book of Acts, did Jesus instruct His disciples along these lines, did Paul ever employ or encourage spiritual mapping or anything remotely like it? Certainly not!

AN EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

Spiritual Mapping looks to be an extension of the church growth movement; it takes "evangelism" one step further. What could not be accomplished using sophisticated telemarketing strategies, spiritual mapping would. In fact, some of the same people who were instrumental in the promotion of the church growth movement are also deeply invested in spiritual mapping. C. Peter Wagner, perhaps the biggest figure in the church growth movement, has firmly entrenched himself in the spiritual mapping movement as evidenced in his books *Warfare Prayer* and *Breaking Strongholds in Your City*.

WHAT ABOUT THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS?

Jesus, in His death and resurrection, triumphed over Satan once and for all. We have been given authority over all the power of the devil. Any "territorial demons, principalities or powers" have no power or authority over the Christian seated with Christ at the right hand of the throne of God. It is the power of the Holy Spirit, working through the preached word of Christ that brings people to a saving faith in Jesus. This has always and always will be the only means required. It is the mysterious, miraculous work of the Spirit of God that we need and not human invention. Spiritual mapping is an attempt to accomplish through human effort what Christ has already done, and is therefore imaginary at best and dangerous deception at worst.

WHAT NEXT?

Spiritual mapping: What a terrible waste of time, money and energy! What must the unconverted think of this effort? And, perhaps even more problematic, what will come next? Certainly the church growth movement has failed as statistics are now showing. Even the alleged "mighty fire" of the Toronto Blessing and its kin is fading. Spiritual mapping has been going on for ten or more years and, apparently, the efforts of the

What Prayer Will And Will Not Do *cont.*

petitions that we have asked of Him.”

The power is not in our prayer, no matter how earnest or eloquent it may be. The power rests in the One who answers the prayer and it's always according to what He wants to see accomplished. It may be through us or another but it rests in God's hands. W. R. Reynolds said: "The sovereignty of God does not override the want, the will, the tears, the cry of his children; but does, in the first instance, express itself through that very want — those tears and those strong desires. It is not that man changes God's purpose, but that man verily and indeed discovers that purpose through his own earnest prayer."

So how do we get our prayers answered? John 15:7-10 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." We need to be walking with the Lord and seeking to do the things pleasing in His sight. When we do that He is more than willing to answer our requests. Not that we will ask for something for ourselves, but if we are really and truly walking with Him our prayer will be a dying to self wants and a lifting up to Him of His kingdom wants.

Paul says in Eph. 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplications in the Spirit. " We are to consistently have an attitude of prayer for anything that happens, even if we know we have the ability to correct or fix something. This kind of attitude breeds humility and is a hard thing to discipline ourselves to do. But it is necessary so that we may train ourselves to be God-dependent.

Col 1:9-10 "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the

knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

It would be good to pray this, for we are to walk correctly, thereby having the confidence that God hears us and will answer. This is because we have the understanding of His will. Paul's prayer is for a knowledge which leads to godly living in accordance with wisdom and the Spirit, rather than the theoretical knowledge of the false teachers. True knowledge leads to wisdom for living. Paul is asking for this in their walk in contrast to the effects of the false teachers' "wisdom" they were exposed to. God's people have always been destroyed by a lack of knowledge.

Phil. 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." To wait with patience is very different from commanding God for what you think you may want. We should not expect that every prayer will be answered the way we would like. Elizabeth in Lk. 1 was righteous yet her prayers were not immediately answered. It wasn't until she was very old that God granted her and her husband their request—and the answer was a miracle in their lives—John the Baptist as the herald for the Messiah. It was God's perfect timing.

Paul asked in 2 Cor. 12:8-9 about the thorn in his flesh. The Lord responded by saying to him that His grace is sufficient. God's purpose was not to deliver Paul from his immediate uncomfortable position but He had a greater purpose. Paul's suffering became his pulpit with power, for when he was weak God was strong through him.

If we look at Heb. 11, the great men of faith, they became outcasts at certain times of their lives or for most of it. Hebrews 11 mentions all these faithful ones—Abraham, Moses, Samson, etc. The writer also

states in Heb 11:36-12:1 "Still others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us."

E.M. Bounds wrote, "Obedience helps faith, and faith, in turn, helps obedience. To do God's will is essential to true faith, and faith is necessary to implicit obedience. Yet faith is called upon, and that right often to wait in patience before God, and is prepared for God's seeming delays in answering prayer. Faith does not grow 'disheartened because prayer is not immediately honored; it takes God at His Word, and lets Him take what time He chooses in fulfilling His purposes, and in carrying on His work. There is bound to be much delay and long days of waiting for true faith, but faith accepts the conditions — knows there will be delays in answering prayer, and regards such delays as times of testing, in the which, it is privileged to show its mettle, and the stern stuff of which it is made."

1 Pet 1:6-7 "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ." We are married to Christ and His love will see us through the worst of times in our pilgrimage on earth. **He never told us to pray to be delivered out of the trials but that we should be strengthened through them.** This is for our own benefit. If we were to be delivered out of every trial we would be weak in spirit. If you ask the people in China how to

pray for them they will tell you not to pray for their deliverance from persecution but that they would have the fortitude to stand in the face of adversity. If those in America, who claim to have great faith in prayer, were to spend some time over in China or any place of persecution, they would get a reality check. They would see what 1st century Christianity was all about. Their lukewarm "bless me abundantly" prayers would be blown away as chaff in the wind. This is where we learn true faith and to submit ourselves to God's ways even when we don't understand them.

The mature Christian prays through his sufferings and adversity and God strengthens our faith and trust. All of God's great saints went through trials to perfect their faith. Even Jesus learned obedience by His experience of suffering and was brought to His goal, becoming mature and complete (Heb. 4:8-9). It's when we are in the cauldron of adversity that we are driven to pray like we are on fire.

Acts 21:14 "After Paul refused the warning of his being bound in chains and given over into gentile hands they all said let the will of the Lord be done." If my prayer does not line up with God's will as revealed in the Scriptures, then I need to ask Him to change my heart. Molding us by changing our desire is part of the sanctification process. If a prayer does not have God's will in its center, it is not a "biblical prayer. It doesn't matter how many testimonials one gets to prove it was answered."

The Psalmist reflected on Israel's trek through the wilderness in Ps 78:16-18. "He also brought streams out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. But they sinned even more against Him by rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness. And they tested God in their heart by asking for the food of their fancy." We can ask for things on ourselves and ignore God's will and guidance to our own destruction, Israel did. Sometimes He will ignore our prayer as it misses the mark. Other times He may just give us our

Bible Study *by Juanita Simpson*

The Parables of Jesus – Part 6 Two Men Who Prayed Luke 18:9-14

Does God hear every prayer? Does He always answer the ones He hears? Is He pleased or insulted when we repeat words over and over again because someone told us God likes those words? We need to look to the Bible to find our answers about prayer. In **Isaiah 59:1-2** we learn that God does not hear every prayer. *"Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."*

God answers every prayer He hears, but not always the way we want them answered. Like a good human parent He will sometimes say, "No", sometimes "Yes", and sometimes "Not now but later". God the Father even said, "No" to His own beloved Son in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asked if He would remove the bitter cup that He must drink. The Father could not say "Yes" to Jesus without jeopardizing the plan of salvation for the whole world.

God is not pleased or honored when we repeat a prayer that someone has said God must answer. God does not have to answer anything! He is sovereign! Jesus Himself told us: *"When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words."* **Matt. 6:7** When you go to God in prayer, you must remember that He is the holy, exalted Lord of all. You must honor Him by coming humbly, asking for His mercy, and seeking only His will. Don't talk to Him as if He were a child or mentally retarded. He welcomes you if you come in the name of His Son and talk to Him as you would to any honored person.

The parable for today teaches a simple but profound lesson about prayer. We find the theme when we look to see the people to whom Jesus was speaking. Jesus told this parable *"to some who were confident of their own*

righteousness and looked down on everybody else" (v. 9) Who were these people? Probably they were Pharisees and experts in the law. This parable teaches us what real prayer is, but its central theme is: What is righteousness and how do we become righteous?

Two men went up to the temple. The Pharisee is mentioned first because the people listening would naturally respect him more than the tax collector. They would expect the Pharisee to be the hero of the story. At the end of the parable the same 2 men went home from the temple, but this time the tax collector is mentioned first. To men, one seemed to be first but to God the other was first.

Why did these men go to the temple? Jesus said it was to pray. In **Acts 3:1** we read that there were times of prayer very day. Jesus called the temple "a house of prayer" **Luke 19:46**. Every day it was the custom of the people to go to the temple at 9 AM and 3 PM because that was when the priests offered the atonement sacrifice. That would give them the opportunity to pray to God after their sins were atoned for. While the incense was being burned, the crowd that gathered in the temple would pray – usually out loud. So these 2 men went to the temple because it was prayer time, and they left when the prayer time was over. If you were there, which of the two men would you think belonged in the temple and which did not? Do we judge which people we think belong in church and which do not?

One Bible translation says, *"The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself."* (v. 11) Would the Pharisee be in the middle of the crowd or would he stand alone? He would not want to touch the unclean people there – especially the sinners like the tax collector. I'm sure he took a prominent position where he could be seen and heard. Let's look at his prayer. He obviously did good things like tithing and fasting. But what did Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about how we should pray, fast and tithe? He told us that we must do those things in private so

God alone would hear and see what we do. The Lord also told us that we must love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, but the Pharisee preferred to tithe and fast. That's easier than loving God and our neighbor. When we love we're never done.

True worship comes from humility and makes us humble. It helps us to love God and others more. The Pharisee's religion made him proud and he felt superior to others. He not only looked down on the tax collector – he despised him. We are to compare ourselves with Jesus, not with other people. Was the Pharisee's prayer really to God or was it only to himself? It's like he was telling God He was lucky to have him. Do we sometimes pray more to ourselves than to God? It seems that he wanted others to hear his prayer. Was he talking to God or telling everyone how good he was? Do we sometimes pray more for others to hear than for God to hear?

How do we know that God did not accept the Pharisee's prayer? Jesus said at the end of the parable that the Pharisee was not justified. (v. 14) Why was his prayer unacceptable to God? The Pharisee was using religion to hold God at a distance. The purpose of religion is to draw us nearer to God. God wanted a place in the Pharisee's heart; the Pharisee only wanted to give God a place in his ritual. God wanted truth and sincerity within; the Pharisee wanted a set of rules he could follow. This man who was so proud of himself revealed to all that heard him that he was not a holy man but was full of hatred and discrimination. He didn't really know God at all. The atonement sacrifice did him no good because he was self-righteous. The same is true today. Jesus' sacrifice will do us no good if we think we are already righteous.

Meanwhile, the tax collector stood off by himself, probably in a corner. He knew that others, like the Pharisee, would not want him close to them because they considered him unclean. He was like people who go to church but

feel unworthy to be there, so they sit in the back seat. What kind of people feel unwelcome in our gatherings? Tax collectors were hated by the Jews because they collected taxes for the Romans. They were often dishonest, taking more taxes from their fellow Jews that they should. They were considered sinners and thieves. It made the people feel good that they were not as bad as the tax collectors.

What do we learn about the tax collector from the way he stood and what he did? The Jews usually prayed with their eyes and hands lifted to heaven. Not the tax collector. He prayed with his head down and beat his breast with his hands. In the Middle East it is the custom for people to strike their chests with their fists to show extreme sorrow or brokenness. It's usually women who do this. The tax collector didn't care how foolish he looked or what [people would say about him. He was only interested in what God thought. This is most important to remember when we pray.

It is from the heart that evil comes. **Matt. 15:19** Did the tax collector know that his heart was evil? We hear in his prayer that he confessed his sin and repented before God, humbly asking for mercy. Repentance would mean that he would have to turn from his evil way of life and try to repay those he had stolen from. Do you think his prayer, unlike the Pharisee's prayer, was a real prayer? I'm sure the Pharisee saw this act of true repentance, but it didn't affect him at all except to look down on a sinner to be avoided. It was the tax collector who went home justified because of his repentance and God's mercy. The Pharisee went home unchanged – proud and out of touch with God.

What do we learn about prayer from this parable? When we pray we must really talk to God, not to others or ourselves. If we pray in public we should be aware only of God and forget those listening. We must be humble before the Almighty God. We must confess the truth about ourselves, not